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[0016] Otherwise, the retainer 20 prevents an uncontrolled penetration of harvested material from the feed channel 12 into the pressing channel 10 and vice versa. In this way, it is ensured that always the same preselected amount of harvested material 13 for each feed stroke is supplied to the pressing channel 10. With this uniform harvested material supply into the pressing channel 10, the pick-up baler 1 according to the invention generates a bale 14 that is particularly uniform with regard to density and shape. In the described embodiment of bale length determination, a sensor including a thumb wheel (starwheel) 21 that positively engages the bale 14 is provided. The thumb wheel (starwheel) 21 is rotated by means of the advancing bale in a direction opposite to the travel direction within the pressing channel 10. Already when doing so, the described uniform density and shape of the bale provides a significant advantage relative to bales that are compressed with conventional pressing devices because the imprecision caused by slip is significantly reduced. The sensor comprises sensing means (movement sensors) of a known configuration that record the rotational movement of the thumb wheel (starwheel) 21. The electronic evaluation device 22 acquires the sensor signals indicating the bale length and computes based on a certain number of measured values of bale growth an averaged or mean value of bale growth for each feed stroke of the harvested material 13 from the feed channel 12 into the pressing channel 10 and the subsequent compression of this quantity of harvested material by means of the pressing piston 9. Based on the averaged value and the value for the preset nominal bale length, the number of required feed strokes is calculated that is needed for reaching the nominal bale length. It is also conceivable to incorporate into this computation additional parameters or measured values, for example, in regard to properties of the harvested material or machine-related data that can be measured by sensors, respectively. After carrying out the calculated nominal number of feed strokes, tying of the bale by means of the tying process of the tying device 15 that is triggered by the electronic evaluation device 22 is carried out.